

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 04009 141702Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /094 W
-----024049 141715Z /46

P 141640Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1745
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MBABANE PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, SHUM, RH, MZ

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: ZANU ESCAPEES

REF: STATE 176195

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY PRETORIA HAS NO FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THE ZANU ESCAPEES. PRESS ACCOUNTS HAVE BEEN GENERALLY
CASTING THE INCIDENT IN A SKEPTICAL LIGHT SINCE OUR
LAST CABLE-PRETORIA 3822-ON THE SUBJECT AND REPORTING
OF THE INCIDENT HAS DROPPED OFF IN THE LAST FEW DAYS.
GIBSON SITHOLE IS REPORTED TO BE BACK IN SALISBURY. END
SUMMARY.

2. ONE PRESS ACCOUNT ON JULY 6 SAYS THE REPORTER TELEPHONED
ZANU MAPUTO HEADQUARTERS AND WAS TOLD BY NETRO TASIRENYIKA
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THAT THE REPORT WAS "TOTALLY UNTRUE" AND ONLY GIBSON SITHOLE
HAD DEFECTED. ANOTHER ACCOUNT ON JULY 7 SAYS THAT
SWAZILAND OFFICIALS SAY THEY ARE ALLOWING SITHOLE TO STAY
TEMPORARILY BUT KNOW NOTHING OF THE OTHER 14. SITHOLE
IS REPORTED TO HAVE REACTED ANGRILY TO THIS SCEPTICISM,
SAYING "I AM THEIR COMMANDER. I CANNOT DISPLAY THESE
PEOPLE IN A SHOP WINDOW FOR SECURITY REASONS". ANOTHER

REPORT OF JULY 9 QUOTES SITHOLE AS HAVING ADMITTED TO THE REPORTER THAT "I NEVER SAID THERE WAS A MASS ESCAPE. I DO NOT KNOW THAT THERE ARE 14 COMRADES WHO LEFT MAPUTO". THE REPORTER WROTE, HOWEVER, THAT SITHOLE OFFERED MANY CONTRADICTIONS AND INCONSISTENCIES IN HIS STORY.

3. MEANWHILE, ACCOUNTS FROM SALISBURY ON JULY 7 SAY THAT THE SOURCES WHO ORIGINATED THE STORY THERE ARE STANDING BY THE DISCLOSURES AS ACCURATE AND THAT INTERIM GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE "RELUCTANT" TO DISMISS THE STORY OF THE DEFECTIONS.

4. SINCE THE JULY 9 ACCOUNT, THERE HAS BEEN NO REPORTS IN THE LOCAL PRESS ON THE INCIDENT EXCEPT FOR A SMALL ITEM ON JULY 13 SAYING SITHOLE HAD ARRIVED IN SALISBURY AFTER BEING GIVEN A "SAFE CONDUCT TO RETURN HOME." EDMONDSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

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TAGS: PINT, PDEV, SHUM, RH, MZ, (SITHOLE, GIBSON)
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